



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE
ALASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD ELEMENT, JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS
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NGAK-TAG

May 6, 2016

Message to the Force #4

SUBJECT: DMVA Communication Initiatives

1. The late journalist Sydney J. Harris said, "The two words *information* and *communication* are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through." I am sure we have all at one time worked for or with someone who did not understand the difference. As your Commissioner and Adjutant General, I remain committed to communicating with this organization. In my last *Warriors* column, I stressed the importance of developing a learning organization. I know that one person is not as strong or intelligent as a group and that we increase productivity by encouraging everyone to lean in together through teamwork to continually improve DMVA. To that end, I would like to take this time to review some of the communications methods I've used so far, why I use them, and request your assistance with improving them.
2. One communication method I use is messages to the force. This is my fourth message to you with the other three covering the roles and functions of the joint staff and the selection of the Director of Joint Staff; ethical fitness and the status of discipline; and the announcement of key non-commissioned officer position selections. The aim of these messages is to communicate with minimal filtering through second- and third-hand transmissions - everyone has played the telephone - game with the overall intent of increasing transparency of actions. My messages to the force should be displayed on every unit's bulletin board, and emailed to every DMVA member. If you have not seen these, I encourage you to ask your supervisor.
3. Recently, I had the pleasure of having lunch with a number of Soldiers from the 38th Troop Command. This was a chance for these junior Soldiers and non-commissioned officers to talk freely and openly without other senior leaders in the room and let me see from their perspective the challenges they face. They also provided great recommendations on how to improve processes throughout the organization. It was truly bottom up refinement. Another way I receive this bottom up refinement and feedback is through visiting you at your place of work. Opportunities like these are a couple of the great benefits of being the Commissioner and Adjutant General and I would love to do it more often. I recently met an NCO in line at Subway, who asked me to visit his soldiers. In these cases, I'll say yes every time. Please let me know when and where, and I will be there!
4. One small, seemingly minor improvement we are currently undertaking is the revision of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs website. In this digital age,

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distributed communications are more important than ever and my goal is to have a first class webpage for our employees and the citizens of Alaska. We do so many great things on a daily basis and have so many programs to offer that I want a website that highlights all of our opportunities. Please visit the new website at dmva.alaska.gov and let me know your thoughts.

5. On February 5th, 2016, we had an "all-call" on the drill hall floor. We broadcast it to all of the remote stations, again trying to reduce the amount of transmission. I discussed our current initiatives, recognized a few of our outstanding employees, and answered your questions. I had a similar all-call in Juneau later in the month. This is something I look to do on a more regular basis. Our next TAG huddle will be June 3rd and we will conduct them on a quarterly basis.

6. I dislike the idea of *information* as presented by Mr. Harris and I remain committed to communicating with you. As I have said before and I will say again, the sum of DMVA is greater than its individual parts. We now have a DMVA mission, a vision, core values, and we're almost complete on the first DMVA Integrated Strategy. Getting out of our silos and communicating with one another is critical to accomplishing our common goals. People who work with me every day are used to hearing me say "it's hard to over-communicate." Most of our misunderstandings and dropped balls occur because we under-, not over-communicated. I often ask myself "who else needs to know what I know about this to be successful." I urge everyone to communicate unselfishly for the benefit of us all.

7. Please stop me in the hall, send me an email, or use any other method to communicate with me about how I can better convey the great things we are doing and undertaking.


LAUREL J. HUMMEL
Brigadier General (AK), AKNG
The Adjutant General